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STATE FOR SCA/CEN

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SUBJECT: TAJIKISTAN - ANOTHER RUMOR OF REVOLT

CLASSIFIED BY: Tracey Ann Jacobson, Ambassador, Dushanbe, State Dept.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b)

¶1. (C) Summary: A former member of Parliament says that he is organizing a revolt. We doubt he has the means to make this happen, but rumors of uprisings and/or invasions from Uzbekistan have cropped up repeatedly over the past year. The Government of Tajikistan may try to profit from these rumors by seeking more assistance from us. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The latest rumor of revolt in Tajikistan comes from Sayfiddin Turaev, ex-member of parliament and former cabinet minister. He met with embassy political assistant (an old friend and colleague) on September 20, and told him that he was helping to organize a nationwide revolt against the government of President Rahmon. According to Turaev, he has been organizing the revolt for the past four years, and has been working with "influential Tajiks abroad" and various "warlords" around the country.

¶3. (C) Turaev said the revolt would begin in Tursonzoda, on the Uzbek border west of Dushanbe, and in the southern Khatlon oblast, along its border with Uzbekistan, where rebels will attack National Guard units. They will then initiate operations around Dushanbe and in Gorno-Badakhshan. The group planned to launch its rebellion earlier, but had been "betrayed" by Mirzo Ziyoev, former commander of the United Tajik Opposition forces. They were now awaiting an event, such as a protest or other civil disturbance, to use as a pretext to begin their revolt. Turaev added that he knew of another group which planned to launch an armed rebellion, but was delaying until after Ramadan.

¶4. (C) Turaev, 62 years old, was elected Deputy Chairman of Parliament in 1992, but later fled the country during the civil war. He had also been Minister for Public Services the Tajik Soviet Republic in the 1980s. He tried to run for President in 1991 and 1999, but both times was barred because he could not gather enough signatures to get on the ballot. He is now head of a private textile company. He said the Prosecutor General has prepared criminal charges against him related to his business activities and is holding the threat of prosecution over him to dissuade him from reentering politics.

¶5. (C) Turaev did not offer more information on his plans. He sought the meeting with our political assistant, but did not ask for any support from the U.S. Government or for a meeting with U.S. officials. We do not believe that Turaev has the financial resources to organize a large scale uprising against

the Government, and his business may be failing.

¶6. (S) Comment: While we remain unconvinced that Turaev has a viable organization to rebel against the Government, this information fits into a pattern of rumors about planned revolts which have been circulating for the past year or so, all involving actions along the Uzbek border. Regardless of the factual basis for these rumors, the Tajiks themselves, in each of the power ministries, truly believe in the Uzbek threat and, to a lesser extent, the threat posed by internal, former opposition. These perceived threats impact their internal policies and allocation of security assets -- with more assets going to the North/Uzbek border areas than to the South/Afghan border areas. President Rahmon and other Tajik authorities have also told USG officials on various occasions that they believe Uzbekistan will invade Tajikistan. These comments may represent an effort to get more assistance from the United States, and Turaev's approach to us could be also be misinformation, aimed at fueling our worries about Tajikistan's security. End Comment.

JACOBSON